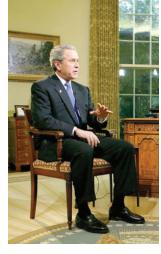
# Saipan Tribune **CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER**

www.saipantribune.com 50¢ Volume XIV, Issue No. 041 **TUESDAY** FEBRUARY 10, 2004



**Necessary War** 

President Bush denied he marched America into war under false pretenses and said the U.S.-led invasion was necessary because Saddam Hussein could have developed a nuclear weapon.

Page 13



### **Aftershocks**

Strong aftershocks jolted Indonesia's West Papua Sunday as workers searched for more bodies from a weekend of powerful earthquakes that crushed homes, tore huge cracks in roads and killed at least 30 people.

Page 15



### **Beyonce Reigns**

Luther Vandross and Coldplay stole some of hip-hop's thunder at the Grammys, but OutKast still won album of the year and Beyonce took home a record five trophies.

Page 20

# FBI: Blast was a deliberate act

By JOHN RAVELO REPORTER

he Federal Bureau of Investigation yesterday declared the explosion at a telecommunications facility on Mt. Tapochau as a deliberate act. It did not rule out the possibility that the incident was a terror-

"It appears it was an intentional act," said Steve Moore, the FBI's acting supervisor for Saipan and Guam.

In a press conference yesterday afternoon at the CNMI Governor's Office, Moore confirmed that the explosion totally destroyed the FBI's communication equipment.

The blast, which happened late Saturday night, ripped apart I-Connect's radio room, the roof of which was thrown some 30 to 40 meters away due to the force of the explosion. No one was injured in the incident.

Moore, however, refused to comment on the possible motive and culprits behind the detonation.

The communications facility also housed equipment owned by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Federal Communications Commission

The site remained sealed yesterday, with more CNMI law enforcers dispatched to the scene. While the FBI is taking on the case as lead investigating agency, Department of Public Safety commissioner Edward Camacho disclosed that the probe has involved other local agencies, including the Immigration Division.

"We cannot rule out any motive," Camacho said. "It terrorized everybody, that's for sure."

He said the CNMI is not on heightened alert, although law enforcement agencies were advised to be extra vigilant. The commissioner said probers are looking at different perspectives as to the possible motive behind the incident, including business rivalry.

See FBI on Page 8

The access road to the I-Connect tower on Mt. Tapochao is cordoned off. Inset shows Department of Public Safety Commissioner Edward Camacho and Steve Moore, the FBI's acting supervisor for Saipan and Guam, speaking to the media in a news briefing.



# Passengers to, from Saipan being monitored

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO

the Northern Marianas.

The Immigration Division is currently monitoring all departing and arriving passengers, including those who recently arrived and left Saipan immediately, as federal agencies widen their investigation on possible terrorist activities in DPS, the Alcohol, Beverage and Tobacco Control Office,

Although the recent I-Connect explosion has not been classified per se as the handiwork of terrorists, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Public Safety have not altogether ruled out the possibility.

According to FBI acting supervisor for Saipan and Guam Steve Moore, the agency is closely working with the

See PASSENGERS on Page 8

# Tinian exec facing corruption charges

The Attorney General's Office yesterday filed 25 criminal charges against Tinian municipality's chief financial officer—the first criminal case lodged by the AGO since Attorney General Pamela Brown created an anti-corruption unit under her office.

CNMI chief prosecutor David Hutton and Deputy Attorney General Clyde Lemons Jr., who heads the newly formed office, filed the charges against Romeo Atalig Diaz for allegedly causing the delivery of construction materials to his

home using government purchase orders on several occasions.

In doing so, Diaz allegedly used government personnel and work hours for his personal gain. The incidents allegedly transpired on July 31, Aug. 1 and 6 in 2001, Aug. 14, 2002 and on three instances on Feb. 8, 2002.

The AGO lodged seven counts each of illegal use of public position to obtain private benefit and illegal use of public supplies, services time and personnel against Diaz.

The prosecutors also charged Diaz with three counts of theft for allegedly stealing government monies on July 31,

2001 and on Feb. 8 and Aug. 14, 2002. They also charged Diaz with three counts of theft by unlawful taking or disposition by exercising unlawful control over government property.

Hutton and Lemons also included four counts of attempted theft in the criminal information against Diaz, which were allegedly committed on Aug. 1 and 6, 2001. They also filed a count of illegal possession or removal of government property that Diaz allegedly committed on Aug. 14, 2002.

In a media statement, Hutton and Lemons said the prosecution of public See TINIAN on Page 8

## **EPA cites CUC-Rota** fuel contamination

By LIBERTY DONES

Latest findings by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency showed that the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. on Rota remains in grave violation for fuel storage tank contamination.

CUC-Rota resident director Charles Manglona said in a report to the CUC board that a Jan. 27, 2004 report by EPA noted "few improvements" made at the

See EPA on Page 8

# Local

# NMC faculty 'too generous' in giving grades?

Northern Marianas College president Kenneth Wright has reportedly aired concerns over the tendency of some college instructors to give out high marks to students who are not exactly deserving of them.

Wright, who previously vowed to undertake a widespread academic standards change to ensure improved quality of learning at NMC, expressed such concern Friday.

When asked, NMC faculty

senate president Danny Wyatt said that Wright is truly concerned whether the faculty is grading the students appropriately, worried that this grading practice may stem from "pressure" on instructors from students, parents, or relatives.

Wyatt said, though, that NMC faculty subscribes to the college's academic standards, which he said are "higher" than similar institutions in the Pacific islands.

"I'm not pressured. We have standards that we follow," said Wyatt.

When asked for specific cases

of instructors' "generosity" in April said that significant giving out A's that concerned the president, Wyatt cited no particu-

lar incident, except the fact that the college graduated three valedictorians last year.

A local resident, who requested anonymity, said Wright's remarks about the grading system at the college mirrored

his apparent lack of trust in the faculty and in the student's academic performance.

Wright in his address last

changes have yet to take place at the college, listing two as most

> significant: inconsistencies in academic standards and "embryonic" assessment of outcomes.

have "We cently discovered inconsistencies in our academic standards. Nothing will

have more serious long-term consequences than graduating students who have not learned," he had said.

He had earlier commented that, based on NMC's records, majority of PSS high school graduates do not read at the level expected of them.

He said that NMC under his leadership and the current board shall "commit to a thorough change of those standards from top to bottom."

"This sounds mundane, doesn't it? It will take years of hard work. And mostly what will be noticed will be new demands placed on students and, ultimately, greater success among our graduates and new respect

for NMC's degrees," he said. He had said the biggest demands for change would be placed on the faculty, which he said should give up the role of being "the sage on the stage" and shift focus on outcomes or as "the guide on the side."

He said the NMC will build outcomes data cumulatively by first determining whether each student has learned, how classes fared, how did all classes in the course do, in the discipline, in the program—adding it all up to help improve instruction throughout the college.



Gov. Juan N. Babauta yesterday accepted from the Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs a \$2-million grant to fund water system repairs.

The money, designed to enhance the delivery of potable water, is to be divided among three projects: well drilling (\$1 million), purchase of well drilling equipment (\$800,000), and water conservation and leak detection program (\$200,000).

Interior Deputy Assistant Secretary David B. Cohen, in a letter to Babauta, noted that the \$2 million is on top of the \$11 million appropriation for capital improvements earmarked for the CNMI for fiscal year 2004.

"We will prepare the grant

award of \$11 million as soon as we have your proposal for individual projects. I understand our grant managers are working with CNMI personnel to identify the projects to be funded with the grant," Cohen told the governor.

Babauta signed the notification of grant award yesterday during a simple ceremony attended by representatives from the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board, OIA and the Water Task Force.

Under the grant's terms and conditions, the funds awarded are not to be used for any purpose other than for which they were offered: water system repairs. (Marian A. Maraya)

Surrounded by members of the CUC Board, representatives from OIA, and Water Task Force members, Gov. Juan N. Babauta signs the acceptance form for a \$2 million grant to improve Saipan's water system.

### DPS: No reason to be afraid

By JOHN RAVELO

Thirty-year-old Gerson Quimzon, a farmer residing near the I-Connect tower facility on Mt. Tapochau, was preparing for

bed when the incident happened.

"We were about to sleep. I was lying in my bed when I heard, 'Boom!'"

He then went out of the house to check what had happened Camacho and noticed smoke

coming from the communications facility late Saturday night.

"I was thinking that it could be fire. There was smoke. Later, I saw police vehicles and firetrucks responding," he added.

While Quimzon said he does not feel terrorized by the incident, he said there are rumors circulating that terrorists may be behind the blast at the I-Connect facility.

Department of Public Safety commissioner Edward Camacho allayed these fears, though, and urged everyone not to

panic. He said that, if indeed it would turn out to be a terror attack, the perpetrators would only feel they have succeeded if the public panics.

Marianas Visitors Authority chairman Dave Sablan said he

does not believe that the incident was an act of terrorism. "I seriously doubt that it will affect tourism."

MVA managing director Jonas Ogren said he would wait for the outcome of the investigation. While conced-

ing that a terroristic act would affect the CNMI's tourism industry, he said the incident has had no impact on the industry as of yet.

"We've been trying to find out what has happened," Ogren said.

Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands chairman Ronald Sablan said it was still premature to comment about the incident while investigation remains pending.

The DPS commissioner urged hotel owners, however, to beef up private security within their respective premises.





### WELCOME TO THE CNMI

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council recently presented Philippine Consul General Wilfredo Maximo, fourth from left, with a resolution welcoming him to the CNMI and extending its best wishes for his stay on the islands. Maximo assumed his post as the new consul general of the Philippine Consulate General last Aug. 2003.

# Manglona appointed to MPLA board

By LIBERTY DONES REPORTER

Gov. Juan N. Babauta has appointed Rota resident Benita Manglona to the Marianas Public Lands Authority Board of Directors.

MPLA commissioner Henry S. Hofschneider confirmed receiving a copy of Manglona's appointment paper.

"I believe that her name has been submitted to the Senate for confirmation," said Hofschneider.

Manglona is said to be a sisterin-law of Sen. Paul Manglona.

Once confirmed by the Senate, she would take the place of former Rota representative on the board, former justice Pedro M. Atalig, who vacated his seat effective Jan. 1, 2004.

The MPLA board has had no quorum since Atalig's resignation and member Pedro Igitol's term expiration on Dec. 31, 2003.

The board is composed only of chairperson Ana Demapan-Castro and vice chairman Manny Villagomez of Tinian.

The board's lack of quorum has delayed the issuance of land compensation to landowners.

Land offers and final payment to landowners require the approval of the MPLA board.

The MPLA earlier said that of 62 land claimants who received MPLA compensation offers, 43 have accepted and nine have rejected the offers.

The compensation money for the first batch of claimants has been made available first week of this month when the Commonwealth Development authorized the first drawdown from the \$40-million land compensation bond.

This even as the MPLA said that it has readied 36 new offers for land compensation that are due for the board's approval.

"We have to get the board's approval before we can make the offer but the board can't possibly meet right now for lack of quorum," Hofschneider said recently.

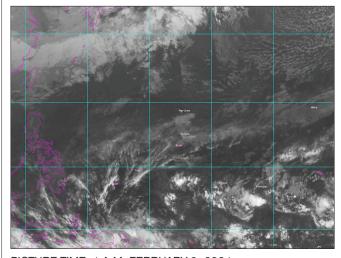
The Land Compensation Act mandates the government to prioritize the payment for lands used for rights-of-way, then ponding basins, and finally wetlands and other claims.

The MPLA has listed some 120 eligible land claimants in the CNMI.

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# **WEATHER FORECAST**



PICTURE TIME: 1 A.M. FEBRUARY 9, 2004 Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A near-equatorial trough extends from 1n130e to 2n140e to eq160e. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with the trough are found southeast of yap and in extreme southern portions of Chuuk and Pohnpei States. This area is between the equator and 6n from 141e to 158e. Trade-wind convergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms between the equator and 8n from 158e to 173e. This area includes Kosrae State and southern portions of the Marshall Islands...including Majuro.



#### SAIPAN AND TINIAN

Partly cloudy with scattered showers. Winds: Northeast at 20-25 mph. Highs near 86. Lows near 75.



### **GUAM AND ROTA**

Partly cloudy & breezy isolated showers. Winds: Northeast at 20-25 mph. Highs near 86. Low near 75



**PALAU** 

PALAU Cloudy with scattered showers. Winds: East at 15-20 kt.

**POHNPEI** 

Cloudy with scattered showers.

Winds: East at 20-25 kt.

YAP AND ULITHI

Cloudy with scattered showers. Winds: East 20-25 kt.

**KOSRAE** 

Cloudy with scattered showers. Winds: Rast at 20 kt.

CHUUK Mostly cloudy with isolated

showers. Winds: Northeast at 20-25 kt. **MAJURO** 

Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. Winds: East at 20-25 kt.

CITY	FORECAST	HIGH	LOW
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	69F (21C)	58F (14C)
Beijing	Sunny	41F (5C)	27F (-3C)
Hong Kong	Sunny	61F (16C)	54F (12C)
Honolulu	Sunny	82F (28C)	68F (20C)
London, England	Partly Cloudy	45F (7C)	99F (4C)
Los Angeles	Sunny	74F (23C)	45F (7C)
Anila Manila	Cloudy	86F (30C)	67F (19C)
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	71F (22C)	53F (12C)
Aliami Miami	Partly Cloudy	84F (29C)	70F (21C)
New York City	Partly Cloudy	46F (8C)	32F (0C)
Csaka Osaka	Partly Cloudy	40F (4C)	22F (-6C)
Paris	Partly Cloudy	39F (4C)	32F (0C)
Pusan	Sunny	41F (5C)	27F (-3C)
Rome	Partly Cloudy	47F (18C)	34F (1C)
Salem, Oregon	Sunny	51F (11C)	32F (0C)
San Francisco	Sunny	61F (16C)	43F (6C)
Seoul	Sunny	32F (0C)	17F (-8C)
🔁 Tokyo, Japan	Partly Cloudy	44F (7C)	29F (-2C)
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	48F (9C)	34F (1C)

# CUC, water task force iron out differences

By LIBERTY DONES

REPORTER

Officials from the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. and the CNMI Water Task Force have told themselves to work together instead of alienating each other in their goal to achieve a 24-hour water supply on Saipan.

This comes amid issues that seem to have caused a gap between the two agencies in the area of funding, staffing, and priorities.

To ensure greater cooperation, no less than Gov. Juan N. Babauta convened a meeting last week between the task force, which is chaired by Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente, and CUC officials.

After the meeting, the CUC board approved to extend the assignment of a CUC personnel week, CUC board members declared their willingness to cooperate with the task force.

Sources disclosed that CUC had felt slighted when the task force blamed poor management as the primary cause of the water problem on Saipan.

Benavente had justified the need to hire a task force manager during a presentation to the CUC board in early Sept. 2003 by saying that the current water crisis is not a result of the lack of water but of poor management. He was quick to add, though, that the management problem refers to "the overall leadership" and not particularly CUC.

"The problem here is not that we don't have enough water, but its management. It may not be the CUC alone but the

During a regular meeting last overall leadership, including the Legislature and the administration," said Benavente.

> He said the administration had initially thought of hiring an off-island water expert—the approach used in addressing the Puerto Rico dump problem but they changed their mind.

> "We saw that what we really need now is a manager. So instead of hiring an off-island, expensive water expert, we moved to vote to get a manager from the CUC," said Benavente.

> The "manager's approach" was espoused by former CUC-Rota consultant Don Smith, who now sits as the task force's 'war room' manager.

> Another cause of the alleged rift between CUC and the task force was the desalination plant proposal, which CUC had eagerly

pushed to ensure a clean 24-hour water supply. The utility firm received no open support from the task force on the subject.

In fact, the taskforce, based on its goals and objectives, did not at all include the desalination project as a way to obtain a 24-hour water supply.

It took the task force a considerable time to convince the CUC board to give it operations funding. Only when the task force reduced its funding request by more than half did the board last month agree to give the agency some \$60,000 as its share.

The task force's budget requirement is equally shared by the Governor's Office and the CUC.

The task force, which occupies a government building on Capitol Hill as its "war room," currently uses three personnel from CUC and one from the administration. They receive compensation from their respective agencies.

In a recent media statement, the water task force had affirmed that Saipan has sufficient water supply but the problem is that it is not equally shared among customers.

Likewise, the task force said that based on recent engineering studies, approximately 90 percent of all water leaks and waste can be attributed to the customers.

Currently, the task force said that Saipan's 126 water wells and two springs produce some 8.5 million gallons of water every day—enough to provide 100 gallons per person a day at an 85,000 population or 50 gallons per person a day at a maximum population of 170,000.

Latest census showed that Saipan population is less than 70,000. About 30 percent of them source their water from 150 private wells, leaving some 49,000 residents sharing all of water that CUC produces.

Theoretically, the task force said the remaining CUC consumers—49,000—should be getting 156 gallons per person a day, provided that all water is equally shared.

"Clearly some customers seem to be receiving more water than others while many receive barely enough water to manage their households," said the task force.

The task force said that it will soon purchase and install at least 4,000 "accurate" meters. It also hopes to install more storage tanks.

## Minority waiting it out before joining committees

By MARIAN A. MARAYA

Despite an invitation from its majority counterparts, the House minority is in no rush to commit to any standing committees.

The Republican-dominated minority plans to wait it out for the first few months of the 14th Legislature to allow majority members—composed mostly of freshmen legislators—to feel the brunt of heavy legislative work as members of three or more committees.

After that, the minority said it will step in to help.

Minority Leader Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider spoke can-

didly of his group's position during the House's first regular session yesterday, citing his 12 years of lawmaking experience.

"I know that oftentimes members will try and sign up for more committees than they can handle. That's not to take away anything from the individual member's ability; and that's not undermining their qualifications or their need to fulfill their required responsibility and workload of having signed up for three or four com-

Hofschneider

"But I have seen in the last 12 years that, typically by the third or fourth month, people do not show up for committee meetings. And oftentimes, no member is removed for excessive absences in committee meetings because it's politically incorrect," said Hofschneider.

There are eight House standing committees: Commerce and Tourism, Education, Federal and Foreign Relations, Health and Welfare, Judiciary and Governmental Operations, Natural Resources, Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications, and Ways and Means.

Rep. Janet U. Maratita is

a member of seven of these committees, one of which she chairs. Other majority members such as Rep. Ray N. Yumul, Rep. Crispin Ogo and Rep. Claudio K. Norita are members of six committees, including the ones they head.

"There's only five work days in a week. There are [eight] standing committees. Now if two committees are calling meetings on the same day, would people be putting the amount of work and effort into a committee meeting or are you going to excuse yourself after calling a quorum? These are

the inside problems or the insides of the workings of a legislative committee," said Hofschneider.

He said minority members should be allowed to select the committees they want to join in, as

opposed to just being fillers in committees that majority members don't want to be a part of.

"Let's wait. In the third or fourth month, come back and see me because the reality is going to show itself. People are not showing up for committee meetings and oftentimes, the chairman is blamed for those bills that were referred to committees. And this is the perennial problem. People sign up for more committees than they can handle," said Hofschneider.

The Precinct III congressman attributed the attrition to the members' other responsibilities outside the realm of legislative work.

"There's nothing wrong with allowing the freshmen to feel their way first. We will help them. This indirect implication that the minorities are not willing to help is ridiculous. Several of them have been coming around for suggestions or ideas and support. And the doors are open," said Hofschneider.



coming from? The Speaker or the Bureau?" he asked during an interview with reporters. Speaker Benigno R. Fitial has instructed the House legal

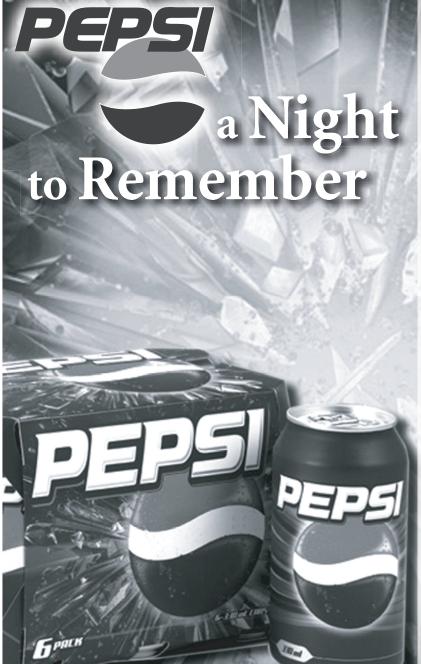
counsels to look into the issue and resolve the matter. "I have no qualms. Whatever the Constitution says, I'll abide by it. We need to address the legal issues. The two legal coun-

issues," the presiding officer assured the House membership. House Resolution 14-8, which

sels have been advised of these

sought to amend the Official House Rules, was deferred for action until the issues are resolved.

"Those issues must be clarified because it's happening also in the Senate. So we need to put a rest to this. Either he [presiding officer] exercises that authority, we pass that amendment and appoint the sgt.-at-arms. But that's about it. We cannot direct them, we cannot supervise them. The Bureau supervises them. And that would fix the problem," said Hofschneider. (Marian A. Maraya)





# **Opinion**



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### **FBI**

From Page 8

Moore disclosed that the FBI's crime scene probers from Honolulu, Hawaii were scheduled to arrive last night to join the investigation. Evidence gathered at the crime scene would be forwarded to the FBI's headquarters in Quantico, Virginia for examination.

"We are not saying that this is terrorism. To the contrary, we don't know what it is," said FBI special agent Arnold Laanui, the FBI's media spokesperson based in Honolulu.

Laanui said the probe could involve other federal agencies, with the FBI's establishment of a widespread network in its joint terrorism task force. He said the U.S. Navy's Explosive Ordnance and Disposal team from Guam would

conduct a first-responder assessment to make sure that the crime scene is safe from unexploded ordnance.

The type of explosive used remains publicly unknown. "We haven't gathered enough evidence to conduct a sophisticated analysis," the FBI spokesman said.

There were concerns, however, that some evidence could have been washed out when firefighters responded to the site to put out the fire that ensued after the blast. Nearby residents who heard the explosion about 11pm Saturday, including those from the lower Kagman village, reportedly observed a ring of fire right after the blast.

The FBI has begun interviewing a number of potential witnesses. Thirtyyear-old Gerson Quimzon, a farmer residing near the communications facility, said he was asked by probers if he noticed any vehicle passing by at the time when the blast took place. "I only saw police vehicles after the explosion."

I-Connect general manager Manny Andaya said the FBI has also interviewed five of its staff, including him and assistant general manager Chat Alves. Andaya earlier said he could not think of any other possible motive behind the incident besides business competition.

Local and federal probers also responded to I-Connect's tower site in December 2003 upon the discovery of a gasoline spill that apparently came from the company's 3,000-gallon fuel tank.

Probers believe the gas spill incident was an arson attempt. Andaya disclosed that the unknown culprits left two gasoline containers at the site. He also noted some burned grasses,

According to the FBI, the I-connect

area would be sealed off as experts

comb the site for possible leads and

cut barbwires and the damage to I-Connect's radio room. To date, he said the case remains unsolved.

Andaya said Saturday's blast totally disrupted its analog service. The explosion also affected the company's digital system, with clients complaining of the absence of a radio signal on the eastern portion of the island, particularly in Kagman and Papago.

The business executive said CNMI agencies also hook up to I-Connect's communication facility, including the Department of Public Safety and the Commonwealth Health Center, among others. The Tapochau facility also links Saipan to Guam.

Emergency Management Office deputy director Mark Pangelinan said the agency has stopped availing of I-Connect's services, saying that EMO's communication facilities remain functional.

Meanwhile, Pangelinan said the Navy's EOD team arrived via helicopter Sunday afternoon. He also said Saturday's incident might have been brought up with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in Washington D.C.

He disclosed that EMO director Rudolfo Pua coincidentally flew to Washington Sunday to attend a meeting among leaders involved in the National Emergency Management Association. The Homeland Security Department was set to join the meeting, he added.

Meanwhile, the FBI and the DPS urged those who might have information about the culprits behind the detonation to call the FBI's Saipan office at 322-6934 or the CNMI Crime Stoppers' Hotline at 234-7272. (With Edith G. Alejandro)

### **PASSENGERS**

From Page 8

the Naval Explosives and Ordnance Disposal Team, and the Immigration division.

"We are covering all avenues, including individuals leaving and arriving on Saipan," said Moore during a joint media briefing held yesterday afternoon at the Governor's press conference room.

The move is in synch with the ongoing investigation on the I-connect explosion Saturday night where one of four radio sites was heavily damaged by a blast believed to have been triggered by a bomb.

Prior to the Saturday incident, I-connect lodged a complaint with the DPS that unknown suspects set its apparatus on Mt. Tapochao on fire. Both incidents were not classed as related as of yesterday, Moore said.

Well-placed officials disclosed that extensive investigation is being conducted to determine whether a terror group is behind the I-connect blast.

Officials declined to comment, though, whether the incident could be an exercise, a trial-and-error activity, or the work of a saboteur.

Late last year, intelligence reports disclosed that certain terror groups from nearby countries are conducting meetings and planning operations on Saipan.

corruption cases is a major priority of

the AGO. They said the Office of the

Public Auditor initially conducted the

investigation on the case. The AG's

Investigative Unit assisted the OPA in

"AG Brown recognizes how cor-

rupt government officials undermine

the public's trust in government and

creates an atmosphere of cynicism,"

Lemons said. "It is the AG's position

that we can start cleaning our own

TINIAN

From Page 8

the probe, they said.

commissioner Edward Camacho revealed that a network has been formed to hold immediate monitoring of these individuals coming in and leaving the CNMI. The network includes the CNMI Immigration division.

### **Bomb experts**

Moore disclosed that a five-man team from the FBI Honolulu Explosive and Ordnance Disposal division would arrive on Saipan (scheduled to arrive last night) to investigate and gather evidence at the I-Connect site on Mt.

The response team would process all evidence collected from the site, including possible shrapnel, remnants of the bomb, and other significant items collected. All evidence would be sent and processed at the FBI headquarters in Quantico, Virginia.

"There is no status yet, no motives, and no suspects. The FBI Honolulu would give updates of the investigation as it progresses. We urge the community or citizens with information to contact the NMI Crime Stoppers at 234-7272 or the local FBI office at 322-6934," the field agent added.

The FBI and DPS refused to give additional details on the status of the investigation but immediately classified the explosion as an "intentional act".

house and not always wait on the U.S. Attorney's Office to do so."

Sometime last year, federal prosecutors managed to get former senators Ricardo Atalig and Jose Dela Cruz convicted on charges involving a public corruption scheme. The case stemmed from initial findings by the OPA.

Lemons urged the public who might have information about the involvement of pubic officials in corruption schemes to contact his office or that of Hutton, assuring that their identity would be treated with confidentiality.

evidence. The site would be closed to the public up to today but tourists could still visit the Mt. Tapochao area. Moore said that federal investigators have been summoned to conduct

the investigation due to the nature of the blast. The explosion damaged a federal property, including radio equipment, he added.

"Charges against the perpetrators would be worked out with the U.S. Attorneys Office but definitely destruction to federal property is included," the FBI's Saipan-Guam acting supervisor said.

### Security beefed up

Commissioner Camacho called on all public and private agencies to beef up their security measures to ensure that their facilities are taken cared of.

Camacho explained that, given the current situation of the DPS, the department cannot deploy additional people to several areas all at the same time.

"We are asking all agencies to be extra careful and upgrade their security measures. We would continue to conduct site security check, both covert and overt operations," said the commissioner.

Camacho said all other agencies were put on alert and urged them to use additional personnel to increase their security procedures in case more attempts are made by the perpetrators.

He stressed, though, that despite the incident Saipan remains a safe place for tourists and there is no reason for anyone to be scared.

The I-Connect incident was the first

bombing incident on Saipan that can be classified as deliberately done by a group. Camacho stressed that it has not been confirmed yet whether the incident was retaliatory in nature.

"We are looking at every perspective and we are covering all angles and bases," he pointed out. Camacho said the DPS is closely working with the FBI to resolve the matter immediately.

He said police officers were posted at the I-connect site to prevent individuals from entering the site so as not to tamper with the evidence.

### I-Connect brings in phone and radio replacement

The I-Connect management secured the shipment of more than 200 phones and radio to Saipan to replace non-working cellular phones and two-way radio as a result of the Saturday incident.

According to Robert F. Kelley Jr. Management Communications Services principal consultant and RME/ Pacific Telephone Company managing director, at least 100 units of cellular and radio apparatus were brought in Sunday and another 100 units were shipped yesterday to replace nonperforming cellular phones and radios.

Kelley said iDen radios and Motorola smart net users were affected by the explosion Saturday at 10:45pm.

"It may take two weeks to restore the tower or the truck radio system and it costs hundreds of thousands of dollars. There are areas affected. If you are on Beach Road or Middle Road, you can still use the smart net but if around Mt. Tapocaho, there would be no signal," said the consultant.

He advised I-Connect users to stop by at the I-Connect office or call the

agency for replacement of their nonperforming telephones and radios. Replacements would be free of charge,

Also, Kelley said I-connect majority owner Richard Yu arrived on Saipan to check on the ongoing investigation and see the damage done by the explosion.

### Community help

The FBI and the DPS advised residents around the Mt. Tapochao area and all roads and access leading to the site to call the NMI Crime Stoppers for information.

Camacho said residents or individuals may have noticed suspicious people or vehicles leaving and arriving prior to and after the incident at the I-connect tower Saturday night.

"We are urging the community or individuals who may have information of the incident to call the NMI Crime Stoppers at 234-7272 or to call FBI Honolulu at 808-5664300 or the local authorities for information," said the commissioner.

According to the DPS chief, it is especially important that information is forwarded to the investigating agencies to resolve the incident.

"People may have noticed a vehicle in the area. We want to know if there were people before or after the incident," he added.

The NMI Crime Stoppers is a community-based intelligence-gathering agency that pays rewards for information leading to an arrest or recovery of stolen properties.

The Crime Stoppers have successfully received support from the community as informants call in their tips without identifying themselves.

### **EPA** From Page 8

Rota power plant and that deficiencies in its spill prevention control and countermeasures remain basically the same as noted in May 2002.

Manglona said the EPA report primarily focuses on CUC's facility security, drum storage area, and the main fuel tank contamination area.

"EPA recommended that CUC should make improvements to bring this facility into conformance with SPCC requirements," said Manglona.

CUC said the problem has not been solved for about two years now due to lack of budget. "CUC does not have sufficient funds to improve its facilities," said Manglona.

The Rota director asked the CUC board to appropriate funds for the facility improvement in its 2005 budget.

The EPA report came after an inspection made by the federal agency and its local arm, the Division of Environmental Quality, on the CUC facility in November last year.

Earlier, DEQ also looked into CUC-Rota's polychlorinated biphenyls-contamination. The contamination was reportedly caused by damaged CUC transformers in Songsong during the onslaught of supertyphoon Pongsona in December 2002.

Authorities said the contamination was detected shortly after the typhoon but information about it was never released to the public.

The CUC management had confirmed that there was contamination but noted that the level of contamination was low and did not require cleanup.

Since PCBs do not burn easily and are good insulating materials, they were used as coolants and lubricants in

transformers, capacitors and other electrical equipment. Since the early 70's, PCB use has been prohibited.

Studies said the most commonly observed health effects in people exposed to a large amount of PCBs are a severe form of acne and rashes. Other symptoms include swelling of the upper evelids and numbness in the arms and legs. Acute effects would develop in a matter of days after exposure.

PCBs are mixtures of up to 209 individual man-made chlorinated compounds known as congeners. They are either oily liquids or solids, and range in color from colorless to light vellow. Some PCBs may exist as a vapor in the air, with no known smell or taste.

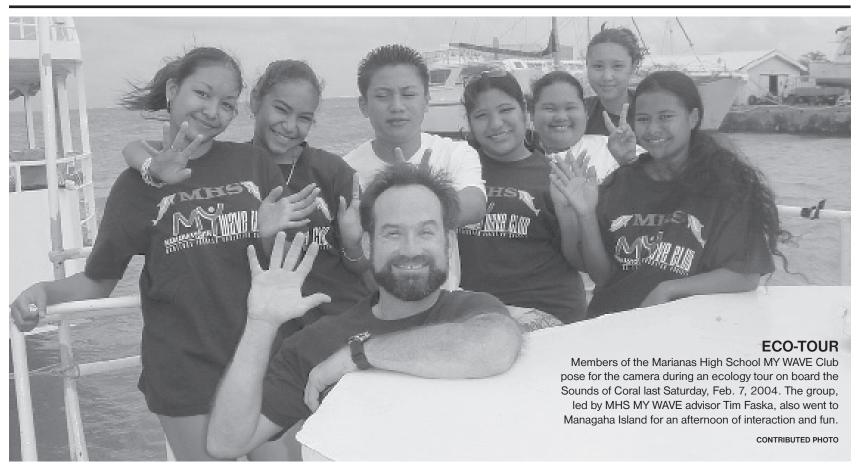
Consumer products that may still contain PCBs include old fluorescent lighting fixtures, electrical devices or appliances containing PCB capacitors, old microscope oil and hydraulic oil.





SAIPAN TRIBUNE

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2004 9



# Nike shoots ad pictorial on Saipan

South Korea-based Dong ATV, together with Nike, are now on Saipan to produce still and motion films for Nike's new products for the upcoming season.

A total of 27 representatives comprise the media group, including one of Korea's top female entertainers. The group arrived on Saipan on Feb. 7 and began filming on Feb. 8. They will be here until Feb. 11.

The tie-up will touch on both television and monthly magazine ads for Nike for approximately six to eight weeks. Monthly fashion magazines include Vogue, ELLE, etc.

The television ads will reach approximately 3 million-plus viewers, with the monthly magazines reaching 60,000 to 80,000 readers per magazine. The tie-up is targeted to active sports enthusiasts and the younger fashion-driven generation. Ad value from this production is estimated at over \$150,000 from both television and magazines.

"We believe that the coverage by Dong A TV, a major TV station in Korea, and Nike, a widely recognized brand, will aid the MVA in reaching out to the active sports market in Korea and ultimately expose the CNMI's potential as a premiere sports destination," said MVA managing director Jonas Ogren.

He added that, by leveraging the reach of the Nike brand, "we are confident that we will see tangible benefits in increased exposure of the CNMI as a tourist destination."

Dong A TV is supported by the Marianas Visitors Authority, Pacific Islands Club, Asiana Airlines, and Pacific Development Inc.

of the CNMI municipal governments

via the Constitution. Authorizing the

municipal council to legislate issues at

the municipal level is a step in the right

Officers of the Association of

CNMI Municipal Councils are Presi-

dent Gregorio V. Deleon Guerrero,

Vice-President Jude U. Hofschneider,

Secretary Mametto M. Ayuyu, and

tal health needs. With that, the committee

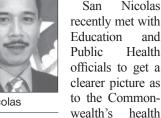
Treasurer Antonia M. Tudela.

direction," San Nicolas said.

# San Nicolas looks forward to committee work

Senate Health, Education, and Welfare Committee chairman Henry H. San Nicolas says he looks forward to working with his fellow committee members to tackle the CNMI's health

and education problems.



to the Common-San Nicolas wealth's health and education concerns.

"On the issue of education, I am very much concerned with the low test scores of our first graders, the scholarship program, school

## ...and supports empowering municipal councils

newest senator, I am here to assure you

that I stand ready to help achieve the

Association's vision [of empowering

"This is not a new issue. However, it

is time that we take a serious look at how

we can improve the delivery of public

services at the municipal level. It is es-

pecially important in light of the recent

municipality decision by the CNMI Su-

preme Court recognizing the chartering

the municipal councils].'

Senator Henry H. San Nicolas announced his support of empowering the CNMI municipal councils last Friday at the Association of the CNMI Municipal Councils meeting held in Tinian.

San Nicolas, a two time chairman of the Tinian Municipal Council and former president of the CNMI Association of Municipal Councils, stated that "as your ally and Tinian's

overcrowding on Saipan, the NMC a few," said the senator.

and key DPH managers was a start of a good relationship between the depart-

"DPH is in the business of taking care of our physical, mental, and environmen-

would be looking into the issue of nurse ment and the committee.

salaries, the medical referral program, preventative health programs, and renal care," San Nicolas said.

Gateway proposal, and CIP to name

San Nicolas said his meeting with DPH Secretary James U. Hofschneider

NCDC and the Japanese government

The NCDC plans to apply and enforce strict rules and guidelines to ensure the market is a safe place for

### Fiji vice president pleads not guilty in 2000 coup

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)-Fiji Vice President Ratu Jope Seniloli has reportedly pleaded not guilty to charges that he was sworn in as president during the May 2000 coup.

The Fiji Times says Seniloli pleaded not guilty to charges of taking an unlawful oath to commit a capital offence

The Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure, the Sports Minister, Isireli Leweniqilia and three other menhave also pleaded not guilty to the same charges for being sworn in as ministers in George Speight's failed administration.

Their High Court trial will begin in

### **ANZ** bank report backs **Pacific Trade Zone**

jobs and lower import prices.

The Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement provides for the evolution of such a zone over the next ten years.

The ANZ survey covers the 10 island nations in which the bank is represented.

The bank's Managing Director (Pacific) Bob Lyon says while there is a risk bigger economies such as Fiji may benefit disproportionately from a regional free trade zone, the plusses will outweigh the minuses.

"Most of the Pacific countries are pretty small and they lack scale. I think opening up a market to six million people will certainly give all the countries a chance to trade within the region, create jobs and we think it is important."

# PNG whistle blower fired for agency audit

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (The National/PIR)—A whistle blower in the Papua New Guinea National Capital District Commission's alleged corrupt deals has been sacked.

He is the chief internal auditor of NCDC.

The National learned at the weekend that the officer was suspended late last year and was sacked last month after the NCDC management discovered his private internal investigation into its operations.

The auditor's report was submitted to the Minister for Inter-Government Relations Sir Peter Barter.

The report formed the basis of current investigations by the Department of Provincial Affairs into allegations of mismanagement, corruption and bribery in the Commission.

"I was sacked for writing the report and submitting it to the government," he told The National.

He said the NCDC management would try and cover-up by saying he was suspended for some alleged wrongdoing.

"My conscience is clear, I know too much," he said.

He said already he had received three threats on his life from unknown persons, the latest was yesterday morning when he was warned not to move around in public. He has taken precautionary measures and has placed special security around him.

The City manager Bernard Kipit and NCDC chairman Michael Malabag released separate statements at the weekend expressing concern at the manner in which the matter was reported while both of them were on their way to China as part of the Prime Minister's official delegation.

Both men confirmed that Sir Peter Barter had commissioned an investigation into the allegations raised by the former officer whom Mr. Kipit said was terminated for "fraud and mismanagement".

Mr. Kipit said the ex-employee was reporting on allegations which he himself certified and confirmed the services rendered.

"He is now making the allegations as a way of taking revenge on the city manager and the commission," he said.

The "whistle-blower" denied he was involved in any fraud and mismanagement activities as claimed by Mr. Kipit.

He was initially suspended over his vehicle allowance which he said was paid to him by the pay-office as part of his salary while he had a vehicle out on requisition.

He was exonerated of the charges by Mr. Kipit on October 15 last year and was appointed payroll manager, however he protested against the appointment as it was a demotion from his previous position.

Two days, later Mr. Kipit cancelled the reinstatement and appointment in a letter to him.

The matter had been left unattended until he was taken off the payroll last month.

He has not been paid his entitlements and his repatriation allowances. He was stuck in Port Moresby, hoping to be paid before he leaves for his village in East Sepik province.



### allowed at new PNG market

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (The National/PIR)— Chewing and spitting betel nut in the new-look Koki market in Papua New Guinea will not be allowed.

Alert Security has been engaged to provide security at the market.

Seventeen men are guarding the Koki market premises and most of them are from the Motu-Koitabu villages.

Alert Security owner Casper Wollom described the new-look market as beautiful and thanked the and engaging in a seditious enterprise.

for the redevelopment. everyone — vendors and buyers.

MELBOURNE, Australia (Radio Australia/PIR)—A new report by the Australia-New Zealand Bank ANZ has argued strongly in favor of a Pacific Free Trade Zone, saying it would lead to more

# **Business**

# Japanese business ties with China explode

By JOSEPH COLEMAN

KIMITSU, Japan (AP)—One after another, red-hot slabs of metal emerge from the blazing maws of the furnaces at Nippon Steel and are squeezed and stretched into long, thin sheets—perfect for car bodies or cell phones.

Their final destination? Increasingly, the answer is China.

Nippon Steel Corp. is one of many Japanese companies profiting from what's called "the China Boom." China has an exploding hunger for steel and construction materials, cell phones, plasma TVs and autos, and the Japanese are working overtime to fill it.

"China swallows everything," said Takashi Kanke, a Nippon Steel official who recently escorted two visitors around the sprawling works at Kimitsu, across the bay from Tokyo. The mills are churning out steel at nearly full capacity thanks to demand in China.

Driven by industrial output, export demand and investment, China's economy grew a frenetic 9.1 percent in 2003, the highest rate since 1997. Japanese exporters responded, boosting shipments to China by 33.2 percent to a record \$62.9 billion. Exports to China have more than doubled since 2000, though they still are only about half of exports to the United States.

The emergence of the Chinese mar-



Zhu Shan, managing director of FTSE/Xinhua Index Limited, explains about China's financial markets at a press conference in Tokyo Monday, Feb. 9, 2004.

ket as an engine for growth in Asia is also speeding Japan's shift of production to China. Nippon Steel agreed to a joint venture with China's top steel producer in December, Japanese brewers like Asahi are muscling into the world's biggest beer market, and electronics maker Matsushita, whose China sales have more than tripled

since 1998, recently made the country the core of its global strategy.

The Japanese—along with American and European companies also making money in China—are betting the trend will continue, boosted in part by construction and other opportunities generated by the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2010 Shanghai World Expo. Estimates

say Chinese growth will slow somewhat in 2004—to 8 percent or more.

The China boom is so strong it is playing a key role in fueling Japan's recovery, a rebound many hope will finally lift the world's second largest economy out of the humiliating slump where it has languished since the early 1990s.

Jesper Koll, chief economist for

Merrill Lynch Japan, said the shortlived growth surges in Japan over the past decade have often been narrow, based on automotive sales in the United States, for example.

"Now it's a very broad-based recovery in Japan," he said. "It's all China."

The rapid deepening of business ties between Asia's largest economy and its most populous nation, however profitable, does make the Japanese a little nervous.

Everyone from steel executives to the Bank of Japan is warning of potentially destabilizing inflation brought on by an overheated Chinese economy. Even those at the forefront of Japan's push into its neighbor's economy say social or political turmoil could suddenly turn the Chinese boom into a bust.

Some also worry that Japan is feeding the behemoth that will one day overtake it economically and politically. Already, an increasingly confident China is chipping away at Japan's influence in the rest of Asia, and Tokyo has watched uneasily as Beijing's relations have warmed with Washington.

Political ties between Japan and China are troubled. Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's repeated visits to a shrine honoring war dead—including the architects of Tokyo's invasion of China in the 1930s—have drawn protests from Beijing. The Chinese also suspect they are the target of closer military cooperation between Tokyo and Washington.

## Boeing's surplus sales draw crowds

**KENT, Wash.** (AP)—Twelve to 15 semitrailers pull up each weekday to unload jumbles of goods at the Boeing Surplus Store in this town 20 miles south of Seattle. And just as quickly, the wares flow out the doors as swarms of bargain hunters grab what they need, what's cool, and what they can resell on eBay.

"You almost can't think of something we don't get through here," said Dave White, the store manager.

It's a year-round garage sale, one amid 100,000 square feet of store and warehouse, with three acres of weather-hardy goods stacked on pallets outside. It's also a profitable way for the Puget Sound business icon to offload outdated and unneeded equipment.

Of course, there's all the machinery that any manly-man shopper could want, from lathes and bandsaws to laser alignment tools, wrenches and sockets.

Then there are the occasional, less expected items. How about top-grade cowhide from England meant to upholster first-class seats? Or some new aircraft carpeting? Both leftovers from canceled aircraft orders, White said.

In his four years there. White said the most unusual thing sold is the "chicken cannon," a 10-foot-long pneumatic gun used at a test site to fire dead chickens at aircraft wings to check their resilience to fowl collisions.

More everyday offerings include computers, office furniture, cafeteria equipment, treadmills and Stairmasters. Boeing has a much smaller version of its surplus store in Wichita, Kan. The company also uses auctions and direct sales to unload other materials it no longer needs.

Despite the steady tide of Boeing goods, the stores sell no airplane parts, an FAA prohibition, White said.

White, a former Marine Corps helicopter pilot, said the never-ending flow of goods at the Kent store brought in more than \$5 million in sales last year. Sales figures for the Kansas store were not immediately available.

That's easy to believe on a recent Friday. Before the doors opened. scores of shoppers crowded outside, primed to rummage. As people burst through, an employee warned, "slow down, no running!'

Most of the Kent visitors know the store well. An October survey found 89 percent were repeat visitors, White said.

The regulars can be divided into hobbyists, who browse to cram their garages and shelves, and commercial shoppers, who make money reselling the goods.

Ed Williams, 52, regularly visits the store the two weekdays it's open to see what he and his partner can resell profitably, most of it on eBay. Their niche is computers, networking equipment and other electronics. He knows of about 10 to 20 other store regulars who do such business, though targeting different goods, such as hand tools.

All sales are final. The store offers no refunds. So it takes an educated eye and a knowledge of prices to know what can be resold profitably.

# US, Australia sign free-trade pact

WASHINGTON (AP)—The United States and Australia reached a freetrade agreement Sunday that officials say will eliminate duties from more than 99 percent of American manufacturing exports to Australia.

The deal, which requires congressional approval, also will boost most agricultural trade between the two countries on products ranging from beef to fruit to macadamia nuts.

One notable exception is sugar, where current rules will remain unchanged. American sugar producers had lobbied hard against opening U.S. markets to more Australian sugar, and U.S. officials were unwilling to risk an election-year backlash despite pressure from Australia.

The agreement also calls for lengthy phase-in periods to increase Australian beef and dairy exports, responding to pressure from U.S. dairy

farmers and cattle ranchers who had Free Trade Agreement that linked the complained that a flood of cheaper Australian products could have cost thousands of jobs.

On the Australian side, the deal removes tariffs on more than 97 percent of manufacturing exports to the United States, including a 25 percent tariff on light commercial vehicles that had severely limited Australian imports to the United States.

The agreement also does little to open Australian markets to U.S. pharmaceuticals, a key Australian concern.

Officials from both countries played down any glitches, instead highlighting the agreement as a landmark achievement that should bring already-close allies even closer.

The deal is the first U.S. free-trade agreement with a developed country since one with Canada in 1988, five years before the 1993 North American United States, Canada and Mexico.

At a joint news conference Sunday, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick and Australian Trade Minister Mark Vaile said the agreement could boost manufacturing in both countries by billions of dollars.

Zoellick called the deal "the most significant immediate cut in industrial tariffs ever achieved in a U.S. freetrade agreement."

Australia, the United States' 13th largest export market, buys more goods from the United States than from any other country. The U.S. economy has a \$9 billion surplus in two-way trade that totaled about \$28 billion in 2002.

After almost a year's negotiation, the deal was struck Saturday after a telephone call between President Bush and Australia's prime minister, John Howard.

## Stewart team to cross-examine assistant

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Lawyers for Martha Stewart get their first chance Monday to cross-examine the government's star witness against the homemaking mogul, a former brokerage assistant who has delivered damaging testimony against her.

Douglas Faneuil, the Merrill Lynch & Co. assistant who handled Stewart's well-timed sale of ImClone Systems Inc. stock in December 2001, is expected to return to the witness stand for his fourth day of testimony.

Faneuil, 28, testified last week that he was ordered by Stewart's broker, Peter Bacanovic, to tip her that ImClone founder Sam Waksal was selling his shares.

He also claimed Bacanovic, desperately trying to protect a lucrative career at Merrill, pressured him into initially lying to investigators. He changed his story in June 2002 and struck a plea deal with the government.

Stewart and Bacanovic are accused of repeatedly lying to the government about the circumstances of the sale. They claim they had a pre-existing deal to sell ImClone when it fell to \$60.

On Thursday, Bacanovic's lawyers introduced e-mails in which Faneuil described Stewart yelling and cursing at him. In one, he told a friend that he had defended himself and "Baby put Ms. Martha in her place."

The lawyers were hoping to show Faneuil despised Stewart, was fixated with her, and was out to get her.

But Robert Mintz, a former federal prosecutor, said Faneuil's testimony has been convincing so far, particularly in explaining why he initially lied to the government.

"Doug Faneuil has come across as credible," he said, "and as someone who has found himself through no fault of his own as the linchpin of the entire prosecution case."

# Major funeral corporations struggling

By ALAN SAYRE AP BUSINESS WRITER

**NEW ORLEANS** (AP)—For the big funeral home companies, death has not been a sure thing.

Once Wall Street darlings as they bought up scores of independent funeral homes, their acquisition sprees have turned into debt-ridden disasters. At the same time, consumers are looking at alternatives such as cremation and low-cost services, and people simply keep living longer.

With the companies selling off, con-

solidating and closing properties, some analysts expect the surge in deaths-albeit delayed—from the baby boom generation of 78 million will not translate into the profits the firms once counted on. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, a person born in 1940 could expect to live 68 years. By 2001, that increased to 77 years.

Just a decade ago, many thought the funeral business would be a recessionproof way to profits, said Joshua Slocum, executive director of the Funeral Consumers Alliance.

"What that model does not take into

account is that more and more consumers are unwilling to be led around by their pocketbooks and charged outrageous prices," Slocum said.

William Chappell, an analyst who follows the industry for Suntrust Robinson Humphrey in Atlanta, said the companies bought too many properties at unrealistic prices.

"The acquisitions did make sense for the right prices and certain properties," Chappell said. "But it came to the point where Wall Street was rewarding them for the acquisitions and not paying attention to what they were paying for them."

In 1999, there were five publicly traded funeral companies that had \$16 billion in market capitalization and \$9 billion in debt. By 2002, the four remaining companies had market capitalization of \$2 billion—and were still carrying \$9 billion in debt, Chappell said.

The one-time leader of the industry, Loewen Corp. of Canada, filed for bankruptcy reorganization and emerged as a trimmed-down Alderwoods Group. Stewart Enterprises Inc., based in the New Orleans suburb of Metairie, cut its staff by 300 jobs in December and said it would sell or close 10 small

funeral homes and cemeteries.

Then, there's the issue of cost. Slocum said the average cost of a U.S. funeral now ranges between \$5,000 and \$6,000, if the customer wants a grave site, coffin, embalming and limousines for mourners.

"You don't have to buy any of that," he said.

And, more and more consumers aren't. According to figures from the Cremation Association of North America, the percentage of the dead that are cremated has risen from 3.5 percent in 1960 to nearly 28 percent today.

# Drug firm focuses on the developing world

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Victoria Hale is chief executive of the ultimate oxymoron: a nonprofit drug company. From her office in San Francisco's financial district, she hopes to wipe out diseases that plague developing nations but are ignored by Western drug companies for lack of profit possibilities.

Hale's prescription is to gain marketing rights to promising drug candidates that are owned by drug companies but sit undeveloped in labs.

The drug industry spent \$32 billion on research and development in 2002, which yielded millions of possible drug compounds, many of which could fight diseases endemic to the developing world.

But with profit pressures, the companies largely focus on lucrative therapies for widespread diseases such as cancer and diabetes and distinctly Western wor-

ries such as penile dysfunction, baldness and other "lifestyle" afflictions.

There's simply no money in fighting the "black fever" in India or the exotic Chagas disease in Latin America.

"Every company discovers many, many more candidates than they can pursue," Hale said. "These are clear opportunities that just sit and collect dust."

So the former government drug regulator and Genentech Inc. scientist launched The Institute for OneWorld Health three years ago when she turned 40—"Looking in the mirror, I asked, 'Let's be honest, what have you really done?"

OneWorld is now gobbling up rights to drug candidates sitting on companies' shelves that could treat illnesses caused by parasites, such as kala azar-Hindi for "black fever"-and infant diarrhea, a leading cause of infant mortality around the world.

## **Prosecutors probe Abbott AIDS drug hike**

CHICAGO (AP)—Investigators in Illinois and New York are trying to determine if Abbott Laboratories broke the law when it increased the cost of a commonly used AIDS medicine by nearly 400 percent.

Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan's office is investigating whether the North Chicago-based drug maker engaged in deceptive or unfair pricing practices when it raised the cost of Norvir, a treatment for the HIV virus, the Chicago Tribune reported in Sunday's editions.

Abbott increased the wholesale price of Norvir in December to \$8.57 a day, or \$257.10 a month, from \$1.75 a day, or \$52.50 for a 30-day supply, according to company records.

medication that people take to lessen wrongdoing.

symptoms to be more comfortable," Madigan told the newspaper. "It is a drug they take to survive. This investigation is aimed at determining the real reason for the price increase and whether it violates Illinois law."

New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer is trying to determine if the company violated antitrust law, Abbott confirmed. A spokesman for Spitzer's office would neither confirm nor deny an investigation.

Both investigations center on whether the increase was designed to make AIDS drug cocktails cost-prohibitive and steer patients to Abbott's newer drug, Kaletra, which is more expensive and has a longer patent life.

Abbott said Norvir was priced lower "Norvir is not like a hay fever than its rivals for years and denies any

### Tokyo stocks open higher, dollar sags

TOKYO (AP)—Tokyo stocks opened higher on Monday, thanks to a statement from the Group of Seven richest nations' weekend meeting suggesting Japan would continue trying to prevent a strong yen from hurting its economy. The dollar was declining against the Japanese yen.

The Nikkei Stock Average of 225 issues was up 95.26 points, or 0.91 percent, at 10,556.18 points in the first half hour of trading. On Friday, the index lost 3.68 points, or 0.04 percent.

The dollar was trading at 105.79 ven at 9 a.m. Monday, down 0.25 yen from late Friday in Tokyo and also below the 105.91 yen it bought in New York later that day.

Stocks were buoyed by signs that Tokyo had successfully won concessions from G-7 nations to halt the yen's surge.

The dollar has fallen from near 120 yen early last year to 3 1/2-year lows against the yen in recent months, raising concerns that it could put the brakes on a fledgling recovery in Japan. The euro has also dropped against the yen.

Japanese authorities want a weaker yen, which lowers the value of Japanese products abroad while boosting exporters' revenues earned overseas.

# Disney's Segway ban upsets some disabled



Meredy Jenkins, a graphic designer, uses her Segway HT to get around her neighborhood in Orlando, Fla. Thursday, Jan. 29, 2004.

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—The last time Doug Exum went to Walt Disney World, he rented an electric scooter to navigate the resort's four theme parks. But he tired of sitting and the scooter cost him \$200.

The next time the 42-year-old computer programmer from Plano, Texas, returns, he wants to bring his Segway, which allows him to stand up as he scoots about on its platform and batteryoperated two wheels.

There's only one problem: Disney World doesn't allow visitors, even those with disabilities like Exum, to use the self-balancing transportation machines. The policy has angered some Segway owners with disabilities and surprised others since the Disney parks have a reputation for accommodating the disabled.

They say even some Disney employees use Segways, which are becoming increasingly popular with people who otherwise would have to use wheelchairs.

"I'm not prepared to let a corporate attorney dictate to me how I should be mobile," said Exum, who is technically quadriplegic from an injury as a teenager but functions as a paraplegic.

Disney World doesn't allow the Segways into the parks because they haven't been approved by the Food and Drug Administration as medical devices, said park spokeswoman Jacquee Polak.

"Basically, it's difficult to accommodate two-wheeled vehicles," she said.

Disney World traditionally has been very sensitive to the needs of the disabled. The resort has wheelchair-friendly swimming pools, audio devices for the visually impaired and a hot line for people with disabilities to call for information. People with walking problems can use wheelchairs or scooters in the park.

But Meredy Jenkins, a 55-year-old graphic designer in Orlando who has multiple sclerosis, said many people don't want to use wheelchairs or scooters because they have to sit.

"They want you to sit in a wheelchair and feel even more handicapped," Jenkins said. "Most people I know aren't ready to sit down. It's an insult."

Disney's policy has earned some caustic comments on a Segway online discussion forum. A writer known as "Okeechobee Wind," who described recently being refused entrance to Epcot on a Segway, plans to spend less money at the resort because of the policy.

"There are times when confrontation causes the pixie dust to not do its magic while at Disney," wrote Okeechobee Wind, who did not respond to an interview request.

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# World

SAIPAN TRIBUNE TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2004 19

# Life & Style

Luther Vandross and Coldplay stole some of hip-hop's thunder at the Grammys on Sunday night, but rap funksters OutKast still won album of the year for "Speakerboxxx-The Love Below" and Beyonce took home a record-tying five trophies.

Despite a tightly scripted show devoid of outrageousness or spontaneity—a marked contrast to today's pop scene-Janet Jackson's Super Bowl breast flash at the hands of dance partner Justin Timberlake remained the major subplot.

CBS and Jackson offered conflicting reports about why she was not at the show, which was televised on a fiveminute delay to avoid anything like the Super Bowl incident.

CBS need not have worried—the already staid Grammys were even more conservative than usual. Curses or cleavage were in short supply, with the exception of Christina Aguilera's dangerously low-cut pink dress.

"I know it's been a rough week on everybody," said Timberlake, stifling a self-deprecating laugh while accepting the best male pop vocal performance award for "Cry Me a River." He brought his mother as his date. "What occurred was unintentional, completely regrettable, and I apologize if you guys are offended."

Vandross, recovering from a stroke, won for best song, best R&B album and best male R&B performance for "Dance With My Father"; and best R&B performance by a duo or group with vocals for "The Closer I Get to You," a remake he did with Beyonce.

It was the evening's most sentimental victory—the R&B crooner's first win in a major category in his 20-year-plus career. He was unable to attend, but sent a videotaped message, his first public remarks since his April 2003 stroke.

"I wish I could be with you there tonight. I want to thank everyone for your love and support," said a weaklooking Vandross. "And remember, when I say goodbye it's never for long, because"—and he sang a line from oen of his many hits—"I believe in the power of love!"

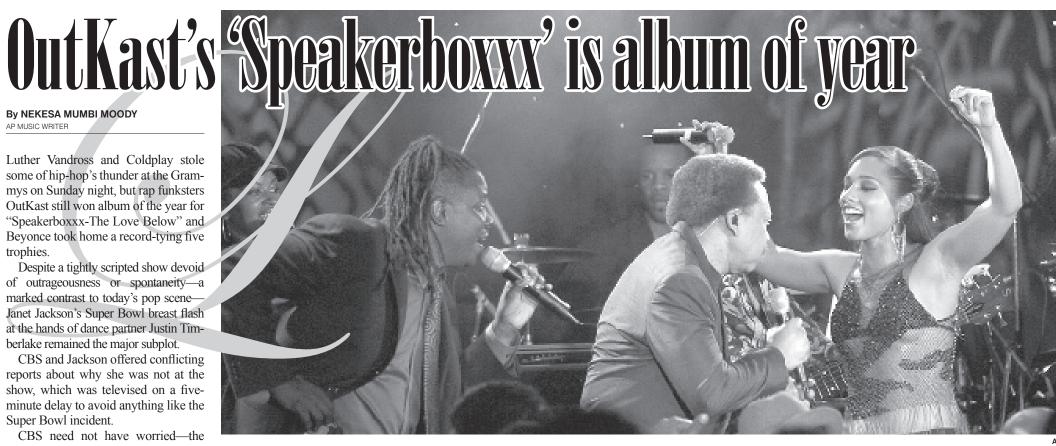
Beyonce turned out to be the queen of the ball, tying a record for female artists with her five awards. But she won none of the top categories of song, record or album of the year.

The moody British rock band Coldplay, up against four hip-hop nominees for record of the year, won for their song "Clocks."

Rockers Evanescence won best new artist in an upset over rapper 50 Cent—who briefly walked onstage as Evanescence accepted their award.

"Thank you, 50," said Evanesence's Amy Lee as the rap star smiled for the camera.

Rock singer Warren Zevon, who rushed to complete a final album before his September death from lung cancer, won his first two Grammv Awards. June Carter Cash also won two posthumous awards, and her husband Johnny Cash and former Beatle



Alicia Keys performs with Earth Wind & Fire at music producer Clive Davis' pre-Grammy party, Saturday night, Feb. 7, 2004, in Beverly Hills.



OutKast members Big Boi and Andre 3000 pose in front of the three awards they won at the 46th Annual Grammy Awards, Sunday, Feb. 8, 2004, in Los Angeles.

George Harrison were also honored after their deaths.

The 46th annual awards show began at 4:55 p.m.—five minutes before airtime—with Prince performing "Purple Rain," marking the 20th year of the groundbreaking song and movie.

Beyonce, wearing a tight dress with a feather skirt that fleetingly revealed her pink panties, joined Prince on his hits and then sang her own "Crazy in Love," which won two trophies—for best R&B song and best rap/sung collaboration. Her boyfriend, Jay-Z, won two awards for collaborating on that hit.

Beyonce also won best female R&B performance and best contemporary

R&B album for "Dangerously in Love," and best R&B performance by a duo or group for her song with Vandross.

Her five trophies tied a record set by Alicia Keys, Norah Jones and Lauryn Hill for the most Grammys won by a female artist.

"This is unbelievable. Performing was enough for me," an excited Beyonce said.

OutKast, nominated for a leading six Grammys, won three: best album. best urban/alternative performance for "Hey Ya!" and best rap album for "Speakerboxxx/The Love Below." It was the first rap album to most of the awards in top categories

Justin Timberlake holds the awards he won for best male pop vocal performance and best pop vocal album at the Feb. 8, 2004, in Los Angeles.

Other multiple winners included Jack White of The White Stripes and Eminem, with two each, and bluegrass singer Alison Krauss, who had three.

Timberlake was all over the awards, performing on several songs and winning two trophies. CBS said in a statement that it had reservations about allowing him and Jackson to appear as planned, but ultimately "respected the Recording Academy's wishes to produce the program they originally intended."

CBS said it agreed to allow Timberlake and Jackson as long as they apologized on the air for their Super Bowl stunt.

But a statement from Jackson's

camp said CBS and the Grammys first asked her not to attend, then reversed themselves and re-invited her, but she chose not to attend.

"She was never uninvited," insisted Jason Padgitt of the publicity firm Rogers & Cowan, which represents the Recording Academy. "She was always invited to be here and she chose not to be."

The incident bubbled beneath the surface all night. "I don't want to have the same thing happen that Janet had done," Aguilera said while accepting the award for best female pop vocal performance in a dress cut so low, CBS briefly imposed a graphic across her chest. "But, uh, if I can keep it together ...

Pharrell Williams, who along with Jay-Z and OutKast also had six nominations, won his first Grammy during the pre-telecast ceremony for his production work with Chad Hugo as white-hot hitmakers The Neptunes. They have produced songs for artists ranging from Justin Timberlake to Jay-Z in 2003 alone.

The Neptunes weren't even nominated last year, because the record companies they produced hits for forgot to put them on the ballot.

"I was a little upset last year," Pharrell acknowledged during his acceptance speech. He also used the opportunity to stand up for friends Jackson and Timberlake. "What happened at the Super Bowl was a bit much, but I happen to know both of those people ... and they've done great things to support people around the world."

Cash, and director Mark Romanek, won for best short form music video for the haunting song "Hurt." Cash's wife, who died a few months before him in 2003, won best traditional folk album for the posthumous release "Wildwood Flower" and best female country vocal performance for "Keep

former President Bill Clinton, former Soviet Union president Mikhail Gorbachev and Sophia Loren, who won best spoken word album for children for their reading on "Prokofiev: Peter and the Wolf/Beintus: Wolf Tracks."

on the Sunny Side." The most unusual winners were

# 'Barbershop 2' buzzes to No. 1 in debut

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Movie-goers are feeling good about hair and hockey. Ice Cube's upbeat sequel "Barbershop 2: Back in Business" debuted as the top weekend movie with \$25.1 million, while Kurt Russell's inspiring hockey tale "Miracle" opened at No. 2 with \$19.4 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

The family flick "Catch That Kid," about a girl who organizes a bank heist to pay for her father's surgery, opened at No. 6 with \$6 million.

The overall box office fell, with the top 12 movies grossing \$92.8 million, down 9 percent from the same weekend last year.

Playing in 2,711 locations, "Barbershop 2" averaged a strong \$9,259 a theater, compared to a \$7,464 average in 2,605 cinemas for "Miracle."

"Barbershop 2" brings back Ice Cube, Cedric the Entertainer and the rest of the gang from 2002's hit comedy set in a gossipy hair joint on Chicago's south side. With positive reviews, the sequel has a good shot at topping the \$75 million total gross of the first "Barbershop," which took in \$20.6 million over its opening weekend.

Blacks made up almost all the opening-weekend audience for the first film, while non-black crowds accounted for a third of viewers at "Barbershop 2," said Erik Lomis, head of distribution



Ice Cube returns as shop owner Calvin in MGM Pictures comedy Barbershop 2 Back in Business.

for MGM, which released both movies. That was a sign the sequel may have more longterm crossover appeal than the original, Lomis said.

"Barbershop 2" also introduced Queen Latifah in a small role as a salon owner next door, the setting for her own spinoff movie, "Beauty Shop," which MGM plans to release around Thanksgiving.

"Miracle" stars Russell as hockey coach Herb Brooks, who led the U.S. team to an upset victory over the powerhouse Soviets in the 1980 Winter Olympics. Distributor Disney

hopes "Miracle" will have the same staying power at theaters as the studio's previous sports-themed successes, "Remember the Titans" and "The Rookie."

"We all like a dose of feelgood," said Chuck Viane, Disney head of distribution. "It's interesting to have a movie in which people know the ultimate ending, yet they're on the edge of their seats. You'd swear you were at a sports arena, because the audience is so into the game."

Bernardo Bertolucci's "The Dreamers" debuted with \$150,078 at five theaters in

New York City and Los Angeles, scoring an impressive average of \$30,016 a cinema. Rated NC-17 for explicit sex, "The Dreamers" is a coming-of-age story about twins and their new American friend in 1968 Paris.

"Osama," an Afghan drama about a child beggar in Kabul under Taliban rule, also opened strongly with \$53,000 on four screens in New York City and Los Angeles, averaging \$13,250 a theater.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at North American theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations

# Finding Nemo' earns 9 animation awards

GLENDALE, Calif. (AP)— The fish story "Finding Nemo" took top honors Saturday at the animation industry's 31st annual Annie Awards, earning nine awards, including best theatrical feature, best directing and best voice acting.

The film, produced by Pixar Animation Studios and co-financed and distributed by The Walt Disney Co., tells the story of a clown fish who searches Australia's Great Barrier Reef for his lost son, encountering a hip-talking group of turtles and a trio of remorseful sharks along the way.

"Finding Nemo" beat out Disney's "Brother Bear," Warner Bros.' "Looney Tunes: Back in Action," the Japanese anime film "Millennium Actress" and the French film "The Triplets of Belleville."

"Nemo" also captured the best

music and best writing prizes.

Comedian Ellen DeGeneres received the best voice acting award for her portrayal of the absent-minded "Dory." Andrew Stanton and Lee Unkrich took home best directing honors.

Among the other winners: the Fox Network's "The Simpsons, which won for best animated television production, and "The Animatrix," a home video companion to the "Matrix" movies

produced by Warner Bros.

"Nemo" was the highest grossing film in 2003, reaping \$340 million at the domestic box office and more than \$800 million worldwide to date.

Three of the Annie nominees for best theatrical feature—"Nemo," "Brother Bear" and "The Triplets of Belleville"—are nominated for an Oscar for best animated film at the Feb. 29 Academy Awards.

# Conan O'Brien takes his show on the road

By DAVID BAUDER
AP TELEVISION WRITER

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Florida in the winter is a natural road trip. Not to Conan O'Brien: He's heading north this week, the second time NBC's "Late Night" has ventured out of New York during his 10 years as host.

"When I heard Toronto in February, my immediate thought was, 'That's just so our show,'" O'Brien said.

What began as an effort to boost the city's tourism industry, still recovering from last year's SARS outbreak, has become a celebration of Canada's contribution to the entertainment industry.

Michael J. Fox, Mike Myers, Jim Carrey, "Will & Grace" star Eric McCormack and the bands Nickelback and Barenaked Ladies are among the Canadian acts that will appear on four nights of shows taped at Toronto's Elgin Theater.

"This isn't about SARS anymore," Toronto organizer Peter Soumalias said. "This is about stars."

The idea originated at a cocktail party last summer following a music festival featuring the Rolling Stones that was held to help the recovery from SARS.

Soumalias' immediate thought was "Saturday Night Live." But when he talked about his idea with Myers, the comedian mentioned O'Brien and pointed him toward another party guest: Toronto native Lorne Michaels, who produces "Late

star Eric McCormack and the Night" along with "Saturday bands Nickelback and Bare-Night Live."

Michaels and O'Brien thought it was a great idea.

"I'd love to pretend that I'm doing this because I believe in helping Toronto," O'Brien said. "But really what it is is that it makes sense for us. I really love the city. When you think about it, so much great talent comes out of Canada, particularly Toronto and Montreal."

Not that he feels his show is in any rut, but O'Brien believes taking a road trip is healthy to help shake things up.

The only other such "Late Night" trip was a week in Los Angeles in 1999. Fire chased "Late Night" from its studio one night in 1996, and the show was also done from

the Circle Line boat cruising around Manhattan in 1995.

"There is so much Canadian pride that has never had the opportunity to be put on display," said Soumalias, founder of the Canadian Walk of Fame. "That's why this is going to be huge."

There were many times more ticket requests than could be accommodated in the 1,000-seat theater. O'Brien quipped that he wanted to "tell everybody that they've got a ticket and hope that there's rioting."

The trip has faced some criticism in Canada for its public financing. Ninety percent of the \$1 million bill for moving "Late Night" for a week is being paid by the provincial and federal governments, the rest through private sponsorships.

Co. Inc. Final figures will be released Monday.

- 1. "Barbershop 2: Back in Business," \$25.1 million.
- "Miracle," \$19.4 million.
   "You Got Served," \$7.7
- million.
- 4. "Along Came Polly," \$7 million.
- 5. "The Butterfly Effect," \$6.7 million.6. "Catch That Kid," \$6 mil-
- 7. "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King,"
- \$4.4 million. 8. "**Monster**," \$3.51 million.
- 9. "Mystic River," \$3.5 million.
- 10. "Cold Mountain," \$3.2 million.



Mel Gibson, right, directs Jim Caviezel on the set of Gibson's movie "The Passion of The Christ," in this undated publicity photo.

# Gibson inspired to make 'Passion' film

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Mel Gibson said Saturday before Gibson said his need to reevaluate his life inspired him to make the biblical epic "The Passion of the Christ."

"I've been offered every kind of excess that money and fame brings and it's not good enough,"

3,800 invited guests at evangelical Azusa Pacific University.

The event, which was broadcast to churches nationwide, was billed as a "training rally" for pastors and church youth group leaders who may use the intense portrayal of Christ's suffering to attract new members to the faith.

The film has been criticized by some Jewish leaders who fear the portrayal of Jesus' crucifixion could lead to anti-Semitism.

"I'm not anti-Semitic," said Gibson, who directed, co-wrote and financed the \$25 million film. "... I've shown it to many Jews and they're like, it's not anti-Semitic."

Gibson plans to open the film in the United States on Feb. 25—Ash Wednesday on the Roman Catholic calendar.



### Tim Roth wants to become a director

BERLIN (AP)—Actor Tim Roth said he wants to go behind the camera as a director, which he calls "the best job in the world."

Roth, who has acted in movies including "Reservoir Dogs" and "Everyone Says I Love You," made his directorial debut with 1999's "The War Zone," a drama about incest.

Roth said Sunday that he's still searching for the right project to take on.

Meanwhile, he stars with Nick Nolte and Damien Nguyen in Norwegian director Hans Petter Moland's "Beautiful Country," which documents a young Vietnamese man's efforts to find his American father.

The film is one of 23 movies competing for the Berlin Film Festival's Golden Bear Prize.

After escaping a refugee camp in Malaysia, Nguyen's character stows away as human cargo aboard a ship commanded by the morally ambivalent Captain Oh, played by Roth.

The movie tries to "stay away from the cliche and not to preach," Roth said.

# Cambodia visit opens Minnie Driver's eyes

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP)—Actress Minnie Driver said she was ignorant about the conditions that women in poor countries work under until she visited garment factories in Cambodia and Thailand.

"The poorest people with the least are making sacrifices for those of us who have the most," said Driver, 33, who visited Southeast

Asia as part of the British charity group Oxfam International's "Make Trade Fair" campaign.

Wearing a patterned red skirt made out of Cambodian silk by local garment workers, Driver said she wanted corporate leaders to carefully consider their buying practices.

"Every time they squeeze to get lower production costs,

faster production, it's nobody but the working women who suffer," said Driver, who earned an Oscar nomination in 1998 for her role in "Good Will Hunting."

She spoke Sunday after a fashion show in Phnom Penh where garment workers modeled clothes bearing large tags reading "Made in Cambodia ... by us ... US\$0.25 per hour."

# Mickey Spillane calls himself a softie

LOS ANGELES (AP)—For 50 years, crime novelist Mickey Spillane has written about tough guys. He even has a hard-boiled image himself.

But it's all an act, says Spillane, whose 53rd book, "Something's Down There," was published in December.

"I'm actually a softie," Spillane said. "Tough guys get killed too early."

The 85-year-old writer has sold more than 180 million material has been turned into books and rubbed shoulders with Hollywood, where his



movies and TV series.

"Something's Down There."

set in the Caribbean, swaps his trademark urban grit for balmier turf. This time the main character is Mako Hooker, a retired government operative who investigates tales by fisherman of a shark-like sea monster.

Once one of the five most translated writers in the world, Spillane says his major achievement has been staying alive.

"I've got a full head of hair and don't wear eyeglasses," he says. "And I've kept the smoke coming out of the chimney for a very long time."

# US poet laureate heading for Yale

WILLIAMSTOWN, Mass. (AP)—U.S. poet laureate Louise Gluck has decided to leave Williams College for a writerin-residence position at Yale

Gluck will teach two poetry writing courses at Yale this fall. Her appointment is for a fiveyear, renewable term, according to Yale spokeswoman Dorie Baker. The move was reported in Thursday's editions of the Yale Daily News.

Gluck, 60, of Cambridge, has taught at Williams since 1983, usually only during the fall semester. She made the 150-mile commute to Williams about once a week.

She has published nine books of poetry, won a Pulitzer Prize in 1993 and a Bollingen Prize in 2001. She was named poet laureate last August.

Williams spokesman James G. Kolesar said the college hopes the departure is not permanent.

"Louise Gluck has several times in the past taken leaves from her position at Williams to teach elsewhere, and in each instance she returned," he said. "She's a valued teacher and colleague and the college hopes this will be the case again."

## Readers offer ways to give new life to old neckties

By AVIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: I read with interest the letter from the lady asking how to recycle her late husband's neckties. My daughter is a 16-year-old honor student who teaches Sunday school and volunteers at our children's hospital. She wears them as belts.

PROUD MOM. CORPUS CHRIS-TI, TEXAS



DEAR PROUD MOM: Your daughter is an original thinker. When

I printed that letter, I had no idea there were so many uses for old neckties. Hundreds of suggestions poured in! Read on for a sample:

"I have a friend who made her prom dress completely out of men's ties she bought from Goodwill. They were sewn together vertically. It was really cool."

JOY IN IRVINE, CALIF.

"She should cut the wide ends 18 inches to 20 inches long and sew them together at the long edges to make a colorful apron. The tapers will give it a nice flair, and the ends can be used for the waistband at the top and the strings at the back."

CLARENCE B., CLEMSON, S.C.

"Two ladies in our church, St. Christopher Episcopal in League City, Texas, gathered old ties from the parish and made them into beautiful altar cloths for use during Father's Day services."

O.H. STELTER JR., HOUSTON

"Old ties can be woven into beautiful, one-of-a-kind area rugs or wall hangings. Incorporated into clothing, they can become wearable art."

JEANNE S., SOUTHERN SHORES, N.C.

"My aunt owned a gorgeous mandarin-style jacket, which she informed me was made entirely from old silk neckties. They were laid side by side, sewn together, then finished off with embroidery overstitching."

DEBE, WILLOW GLEN, CALIF.

"She should use them to make a quilted Christmas wreath. It will become a family heirloom."

GINI M., OSHKOSH, WIS.

"One of the most precious gifts I ever received was a Christmas stocking made for my 6-month-old daughter when her grandfather died. A very special cousin made it from some of his ties for her first Christmas. It's a family treasure.'

SHARON IN NEWBERRY PARK, CALIF.

"Here's an idea: With that many ties, she's bound to have a picture of Grandpa wearing some of them. Why not mount a picture of Grandpa wearing the tie in a frame along with the tie? It would make a wonderful keepsake."

DAYNA IN LONGVIEW, TEXAS

"Discarded neckties can be used to make pot holders, table runners, teddy bears, pocketbooks, tote bags and more."

HENNIE C., SPARTANBURG, S.C.

"How about using them to make Christmas tree skirts? Stitch them together in a circle with the points facing outward."

CAROL P., SPARTANBURG, S.C.

"I use my husband's cast-off ties to make cases for my jewelry." Working with the wide ends, I cut them in 3-inch, 4-inch and 5-inch lengths and stitch them to form pouches. Then I fold the triangle tip down like the flap on an envelope and put a snap on the other side. Voila!"

ANNA MARIA S., SILVER SPRING, MD.

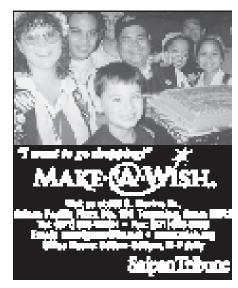
DEAR ANNA MARIA AND THE HUNDREDS OF WONDERFUL PEOPLE WHO WROTE TO OFFER IDEAS: The dear lady who wrote asking for ideas is sure to be overwhelmed with your clever uses for ties. (I certainly was.) And if she isn't handy with a needle and thread, she can sell them on eBay or donate them to a thrift shop, a homeless shelter or college theater department.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

# **Pastimes**

#### By DAVID WONDERWORD, **OUELLET** HOW TO PLAY: all the words fiscal blue-spaces in the plaza. — horizon sale, sortically, they male, even backward, find them and Carolle THEIR LETTERS UNLY, TO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD, The custo falces spate. SWEED CANDY TREATS LTPARWGSEXOBOWS VARIETYGBREDSUP SSNHKRAALEARRWE YTCOUMGNRUTATIA MEOPISLTOTOFWSR BHBBUTBAGSNOIHM OHNGFOINKOAZSGI LAAWTCTDMCEETEN ARMRHKEAATNASP RDEALINEERGSNAP UANCLNTILSTNTHA TDTKIGAEHVCLASS AOSCCPWINTERPHS NOELKUESGNOSEDS (T)(R)(A)(T) R F S S F D T F F W S

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#### CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY

Robert Wagner, George Stephanopoulos, Stella Adler, Roxanne Pulitzer

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: You will stand out in a crowd this year, so prepare to take advantage of it. You will be a true leader, however, be sure to watch out for and compensate the underdog. Being humble will be half the battle. Your numbers are 3, 9, 13, 22, 28, 40



IN ASTROLOGY



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### ARIES (March 21-April 19)

Your emotions will get the better of you if you are impulsive. Take time to think about what you are going to say to the person who is upsetting you. Being pushy will only escalate the problem.  $\Box\Box\Box$ 



### TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

You can make advances you have been pushing for if you are practical in your handling of business dealings. You can profit financially through promotions and the presentation of your ideas. Take care of your health.  $\Box\Box\Box$ 



### **GEMINI** (May 21-June 20)

Activities involving youngsters will be successful and bring you greater popularity. Travel should be on your agenda. Get together with people who stimulate you mentally.  $\Box\Box\Box\Box$ 



### CANCER (June 21-July 22)

Someone you live with or are close to will be difficult to handle today. You may have to back away from a situation that appears to be impossible right now.  $\Box\Box$ 



### **LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22)

Your ability to inspire others will bring great results today. Love and romance can be yours if you are affectionate with someone who has captured your heart.  $\Box\Box\Box\Box$ 



#### **VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

Remember what you used to regard as fun and exciting and consider reintroducing these activities into your life. Don't let it cost you more than what you can afford.  $\Box\Box\Box$ 



#### LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

Relationship problems may surface if you aren't careful with how you handle someone you love. You may be suspicious that deception is involved, but you will probably be overreacting.  $\Box$ 



### **SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

You can make all sorts of changes if you really want to turn things around in your life today. You must start to do the things you enjoy and spend time with the people who inspire you the most.  $\Box\Box\Box\Box\Box$ 



### SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

You may not want to take on additional responsibilities, but you will probably be forced to. Do what you can, but not at the expense of ruining your own health. Take money matters seriously.  $\Box\Box\Box$ 



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) This is not the time to push a partnership to the limit. Someone you are close to may be feeling vulnerable right now and if you are not attentive, you relationship could easily take a turn. □□□



### AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

You will pick up a lot of information just by observing how your peers react to the situations going on around them. The lessons you learn today will benefit you professionally.  $\Box\Box\Box$ 



### PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

Make some plans to socialize. Your ability to adapt will be to your advantage. Take part in unusual activities that will open your mind to different cultures. Change will be beneficial.  $\square\square\square\square\square$ 

BIRTHDAY BABY: You have a very creative imagination that takes you down unusual pathways. Your curious nature is enlightening and certainly brings an interest from those observing what you are doing.

Check out Eugenia's Web sites at astroadvice.com and eugenialast.com.

### Calvin and Hobbes







### **Garfield**®





### Adam@home

### By Bryan Basset

### The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

By Jim Davis









The official rules for both runs are as follows:

All registered runners must be checked-in prior to the start time; all runners must remain on the ocean side of Beach Road throughout the course; all runners must also remain on the shoulder of the road within coned areas.

Running anywhere else may result in a disqualification.

An official will be stationed at each turn-around marker for checkoff. Runners not checked off will be disqualified from the competition.

The 10k turn-around is located across the Saipan Bowling Center in San Jose. The turn-around marker for the Half Marathon is at the San Antonio Beach Park just





SPORTS BRIEFS

**122 CONFIRMED** 

From Page 28



So far, 11 tournaments slated by **BANMI** 

Eleven basketball tournaments and still counting.



### O'Neal's Pacers stop Pistons' 13-game winning streak

Jermaine O'Neal had 28 points and 15 rebounds to help the Indiana Pacers snap the Detroit Pistons' 13-game winning streak Tuesday with an 81-69 victory.



28 THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 2004

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

# 122 confirmed for Half Marathon/10K

### Race orientation tomorrow

By SHAN SEMAN

total of 122 competitors, mostly from Japan, have confirmed participating in the upcoming Saipan Half Marathon/10K Fun Run, which will take place this Saturday, January 24.

Off the 122 runners, 79 will see action in the 23rd Annual Half Marathon while 43 will slug it out for supremacy in the 18th Annual 10K Fun Run.

Those figures were released yesterday during a meeting between the Marianas Visitors Authority and Northern Mariana Islands Track and Field Federation at the MVA office in San Jose.

According to Ed Johnson of MVA, over 50 percent of the total number of participants are from Japan.

> "We were working closely with our offices

in Japan and Korea, and as of today [January 21], more than 50 percent are from Japan," he said. "Majority from Japan are above 50 years old and have participated in this event for 10-plus years. It is a well known event, formerly known as the MVA Buffalo Fun Run, so runners from Japan are pretty familiar with it."

Prior to the event, all participants are encouraged to attend a race orientation tomorrow, January 23, at the MVA parking lot. A briefing for all non-English speaking runners will be held at 4:30pm while English-speaking competitors will have their orientation



Organizers of the upcoming Saipan Half Marathon/10K Championships strike a pose for a photo during a meeting yesterday at the Marianas Visitors Authority conference room. Standings from left to right are Elias Rangamar and Robin Eugenio of the Northern Mariana Islands Track and Field Federation, and Ed Johnson and Martin Duenas of the MVA. Sitting is NMITFF president Kurt Barnes.

at 5pm. MVA will also provide translators and account staff to handle pay-

runs is \$30. Towever, the last day, to register is Saturday between 4:30 and 5:15am during the pre-race check-in. The fee required to compete in either Both races will then get underway at 5:

30am at the intersection of the American Memorial Park and Beach Road just north of the Department of Public Safety Garapan Substation. Runners

will work their way south along Beach Road and back track to the finish line, also located at the intersection.

See 122 CONFIRMED on Page 27

# Roddick, Agassi win at Australian Open

**By JOHN PYE** AP SPORTS WRITER



MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Topranked Andy Roddick and defending champion Andre Agassi breezed into the third

round of the Australian Open by winning in straight sets Wednesday over Czech rivals.

Agassi had a 6-0, 6-2, 6-4 win over 18year-old Tomas Berdych, closing with an ace in 1 hour 22 minutes. Roddick fired 20 aces and didn't lose a point on his first serve in the third set of a 6-2, 6-2, 6-3 win over Bohdan Ulihrach.

Roddick set up triple match point with a curling forehand winner down the line and finished it off in 1:13 with a booming first-serve winner.

Justine Henin-Hardenne, ranked No. 1 and winner at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open in 2003, had a 6-1, 6-4 win over childhood friend Camille Pin of France in her second-round match, See Roddick on Page 27



Andre Agassi of the U.S. reacts after his second round win over Tomas Berdych of the Czech Republic at the Australian Open in Melbourne, Australia, Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2004. Agassi won in straight sets 6-0, 6-2, 6-4.

### Youth Volleyball canceled as teams pull out

By SHAN SEMAN

REPORTER

Just last week, it seemed like everything was set for another thrilling season of youth volleyball action.

That, however, won't be the case as Division of Sports and Recreation staff Iovie Omar stated vesterday that officials have decided to cancel the Island-wide Youth Volleyball League 2004 season due to an insufficient number of teams participating.

Omar said that the Marianas High School Dolphins and the Kagman High School Ayuyus pulled out of the competition after learning that it will coincide with another volleyball league that they've committed to. The other league is being coordinated by the Marianas Interscholastic Sports Association—the sports body for high schools. She also hinted but did not confirm that the Saipan Southern High School Manta Rays might have also pulled out to compete in the MISA league.

With the three teams withdrawing, the boys division was left with just one team—Shag. Only two teams remained in the girls' division— Chickas and the Grace Christian Academy Eagles—forcing officials to call the league off.

For the record, the league featured iust one official result in 2004. Last Thursday, the defending champions

Chickas were scheduled to battle the Eagles in the season-opener, but suited up just four players for the match, resulting in the

Eagles winning via forfeit.

The league, normally held in November, was postponed several times towards the end of last year due to the same reason it was canceled. Earlier in the month, officials were positive as more teams signed up for competition. A total of 20 games were scheduled to take place in the girls' division while the boys' corner would've featured 12 matches in the regular season.